No 133
Decr. 16. 1826
No 55 South 7th.

An Experimental Inquiry
Passed March 27th. 1827
into good W. E. H.

the supposed virtues of the Stillingia.

Offered to the Trustees & Professors
of the Medical School of Philadelphia

as an Inaugural address
for the degree of M. D.

by
L. C. Trezevant
of Charleston
So Ca

Gentlemen

I freely offer the following pages to your consideration, not under the impression that they will command or even deserve your attention, but to fulfil a duty required of me, as a candidate for the degree of Doctor of Medicine

During the course of the last summer there appeared among us, in the city of Charleston, a remedy that was to cure almost all diseases, under the title of the "Queen's-delight." Having heard of many surprising cures made of it, in Rheumatism, Sencond^y Syphylis, cutaneous diseases &c, &c, I determined to test its virtues by experiment, for my own satisfaction; I did so; and having resolved to offer myself for graduation, I thought it would be as well to make a draught upon your patience in this form as in any other; this led me to hand in the result of those experiments for that purpose. I would here

however observe, that, my time & opportunities for experimenting, have been so limited, I am afraid I shall not do justice to the character of the article: such facts however as I have collected, & such observations as I have made are readily submitted, trusting that at some future period I shall be enabled to examine into its virtues more fully & satisfactory.

"Contemplating the numberless diseases to which man is liable, & which may cause him to drag out a protracted life of misery & distress, or suddenly to cut him off in the bloom of his existence & amidst his usefulness, we must adore that divine excellence which has in medicine given to us the means of counteracting those dreadful evils, which otherwise would have severely molested our temporal condition".

And to what country has "the father of nature" been more liberal in these blessings than to the United States; where can we find, in any land, a greater profusion of these gifts by which the mortal part of man may be restored from almost total dissolution to comparative soundness. And have we not been guilty of a serious cause of reproach in neglecting these favours, thereby rendering our=

=selves dependant on foreign nations for ar=
=ticles necessary to our existence? It is but
too true. Let us rouse ourselves then from
this lethargy (the true cause of our neglect)
& exert ~~every~~ power, by industry, perseverance
& individual enterprise, to gain a fame for
our articles of the Materia Medica, as we have
already done for our skill as Surgeons and
Practitioners. - I speak as an American -
It is ~~in~~ this way only that a perfect & com=
=prehensive knowledge of nature can be
acquired. The knowledge of the Materia Medica
in the old countries, was gradually brought
to that capacious extent, in which it exists
at present, by a long series of experiments, aid=
=ed by the researches of travellers & naturalists,
& the discoveries & combinations of chemists:
but it is not from the labours of one indivi=
=dual, tho' he were a Linnaeus, that a -

knowledge of nature is to be gained; it sho^d be the combined efforts of all who profess to practice Medicine, more particularly of the junior members of the profession, & it is from those we are to look for this undertaking. We may express a hope that the time is not far distant, when this shall be no longer in anticipation. "Most evils have their correctives, & it would seem especially to be a part of the benevolent scheme of Providence, that the malignant distempers incident to a climate, should be invariably associated with their appropriate remedies. If this be the case, can there be a nobler field for our exertions, than that which lies before us (the N.S.)? The immense regions which we claim, tho' hitherto little explored, are known to be exuberant in the most active vegetables. It is more than probable, that on some of the alpine

heights, or along the margin of those bold streams which pervade our wide spread continent, there blooms many a plant, whose virtues, now flung on the "desert air", may be peculiarly adapted to the gigantic forms of disease, & capable of reducing the lengthen=ed catalogue of the Apsorbia Medicorum."

These observations are not made in antici=pation, as a prelude, to the consideration of an article bearing the power of "reducing the lengthened catalogue of the Apsorbia medicorum"; but, to prove that, it is only by experiment ~~that~~ we are to discover the va=lue or unfitness of an article for medical uses is its object. If we neglect those of minor importance how are we to find out those having great powers.

## Botanical History

The Stillingia* in the classification of Linnaeus is of the class - Monoecia
order - Monadelph.
Species - Sylvatica
thus described. — Stillingia. male. calyx hemispherical, many-flowered: corol tubular, lacerated. Female. calyx 1-flowered, inferior: corol superior: style 3-cleft: capsule 3-grained.
Species — Sylvatica

Carolina, shrub with erect milky stems, leaves elliptic, serulate, shining: spike terminal sessile: flowers yellow.

The above classification notices but one species, Sylvatica; this is the one we are to consider in the following essay. Professor Elliot in his excellent work, notices three species, thus an=

* [illegible]

=ranged. — Stillingia

class - Monœcia
order - Monadelph.
Species - Sylvatica
" Sebifera
" Ligustrina

In the "families of plants" it is under the same class & order, but, one species noticed. As we are interested only in the species Sylvatica, & the description given of it by Professor Elliot being the most satisfactory, I prefer using his authority. After his classification, as above noticed, he describes this species in the following manner.

Sylvatica. Lin:

Herbaceous; leaves sessile; oblong lanceolate, tapering at base, serrulate; sterile flo= =ets scarcely longer than the bracteal scale. — Root large, woody, perennial. Stem herbaceous,

2-3 feet high somewhat angled by the base of the leaves with the whole plant glabrous and lactescent. Leaves alternate, irregularly serrulate somewhat coriaceous, shining on the upper surface, paler beneath. Stipules: several small subulate glands in the axils of the leaves & flowers. Flowers in a terminal spike, the upper crowded as in anament, sterile, with interposing capsulate glands. Fertile floscets few at the base. Sterile floscets. Calyx a scale, ovate, obtuse, mucronate, many flowered. Corolla 1-petalled, funnel shaped, rugose yellowish, the border somewhat bilabiate, undulate, filaments 2, thick, longer than the corolla. Fertile floscets. Calyx obtuse. Corolla superior, 1-petalled, with the margin fimbriate. Style erect, 3-cleft, (perhaps 3 united). Capsules rather rough, 3-celled, one seed in each cell.

Grows in dry sandy soils.
Flowers in May — June.

We are now fully possessed of the botanical history of this plant; & I have been perhaps more minute in its description than its virtues, to be soon examined, will recompense for; be this as it may, yet I think it as necessary that its character should be as well known, as if it proved valuable.

## Medicinal Properties

When this article was first brought to my notice, independant of its application to disease, it bore the character of being an emetic; In my experiments with it, it has supported that character, & I think exhibited in as stronger manner the property of a cathartic; In its use in diseases it was given as an alterant, which I think it possesses in the greatest degree. The value of it however will be better determined by stating the result of the experiments in regular order.

Emetic Property.

Case 1st. Mr. S....., who had been for some time troubled with an eruption on his shoulders & part of his back, was recommended to try a decoction of this root with a view to its alterant effect, (decoction made by boiling an ounce of the root in a pint of water, down to three gills) he did so, & on taking the first dose, directed to be a common tea-cup-full, it proved emetic vomiting him freely & copiously.

Case 2nd. Mr. C..... after a little persuasion, as an experiment was induced to chew a bit of the root & swallow his saliva; after he had continued it for twenty-five or thirty minutes he was affected with a "deadly sickness" at his stomach, unattended with vomiting; he was compelled to seek a recumbent posture for relief, but its effects lasted some hours.

Case 3rd. On visiting a man a day or two

after he had commenced the use of this article, he complained to me of its violent effects upon him that morning, he said, I use his own expression, "he had almost puked his insides out". In this case it was used in form of Jr. dose ℥j every two hours.

These cases prove that the stillingia possesses an emetic power; but we are possessed of so many articles which rank higher as emetics, that it would be superfluous to value this one for that property.

## Cathartic Property

Case. — An individual afflicted with palsy was ordered an emetic by his physician I asked the privilege of trying the powdered root of the stillingia to effect the purpose; with this view I administered xxv grs of the powder, & directed it to be repeated ~~by~~ twenty minutes, — it was done accordingly, & on the expiration

instead of having the expected effect, it proved a strong cathartic, purging him three or four times. I made no farther experiments with the powder: but must grant that, invariably, in whatever form it was used, it had a tendency to keep the bowels open.

It would be as well to observe here, that a young friend, who had some opinion of this plant & to whom I am indebted for the case concluding this essay, observed to me that he "had never used the stillingia without its proving diuretic". I granted to him its virtues as an emetic & cathartic, but could not concede this point, as I had never found the least tendency to an action on the urinary organs, in any of my experiments. He may be correct notwithstanding, tho' I should attribute its diuretic effect more to the water taken in with it. It never however will rank as of consequence.

## Application to Disease

In the following cases of the use of the article in disease, I shall give a fair statement of facts, & allow them to speak for themselves I am not prejudiced against the plant, as the tenor of this discourse shows, & the following cases will prove.

Case 1st. The first case in which I used this article, was in a child, born of scrofulous parents, but previous to this time exhibiting a good frame of body, tho' very precocious in intellect, - one of the signs of a constitution affected with a scrofulous diathesis. The disease for which he was treated, was a breaking out of ulcers, small in circumference, - tho' deep, about the face, neck, & head, accompa= =nied with a swelling of the parotid of the right cheek, over which was situated an ulcer. The character of these ulcers was not decidedly of a scrofulous nature, tho' evidently prevented from

healing, under the former treatment, by his habit of body. Having determined on the use of the Stillingia it was directed to be given in the form of decoction, as follows: Stillingia root ℥i Boiling water ℔i, to be simmered over the fire down to three gills, this divided into four equal parts one to be given every third hour. I will state that, previous to the use of this remedy, from being smart, intelligent & lively, as before observed, he became exceedingly dejected in spirits — he noticed no one, & appeared to care for no one but his mother; his appetite was gone, not even such articles as children are most commonly fond of, as sweet things &c, could tempt him; his strength failed very perceptibly. From such a state he certainly was relieved, in a week, by this plant. The change was very pleasing: the ulcers were so far healed as to require little or no farther attention; he recovered his former flow

of spirits; his appetite was very great; the swelling quite gone (local applications were however used to it) & the child so much relieved in every res= =pect as to require my attention no longer. I however directed the decoction to be continued some days longer to perfect the cure.

I must confess, this is a strong case in favour of the article, but unfortunately, it is not support =ed by others.

Case 2nd. In justice I am compelled to give the following case, because it "got well" under the use of this article; but I think that, in the majority of cases, cold water together with low diet, rest, & local applications to the part, will cure the disease as perfectly as it can be done by the use of any internal remedy; this plan was fully pursued in this case. My reason for trying it in this case was, from having heard it highly lauded for its power over this disease.

Z....., an Italian, was admitted into the Poor-house Hospital, in Charleston, on the 11th of April; when examined by the attending physi=cian he was found to have a bubo in each groin, no chancre, but "a running". The buboes were ordered to be blistered. I then asked the privilege of trying the effect of the Stillingia, stating the character I had received of it.- he consented to the experiment being tried; before however he commenced its use the blisters had been applied, & had drawn in a considerable degree; they were ordered to be taken off in order to prove the full power of the root. 13th He com=menced the use of the decoction, a pint a day. 15th we found the running decreased; the buboes much reduced, & entirely relieved from pain; on the 20th the running had ceased entirely; the swellings in the groin reduced, tho a little hard to the touch. After continuing the remedy a few

days longer he left the house well. I must state that, when he entered the hospital he complained much of a head acke & very sore mouth, — his spirits were greatly depressed, & after having taken from a pound to a pound & a half of the decoction, he was entirely relieved from these, & his spirits astonishingly improved. Its action upon the nervous system at all events is pretty evident, more so when I state that, I always found it acted as an anodyne.

Case 3rd. Holand was handed over to me as a fair case to try the stillingia in, he had pseudo syphylis. When examined he was found in the following state; his penis was swollen to about three times its natural size, with a sore on the under side of the prepuce as large as a half dollar piece, not a chancre; & a buto in the right groin which had burst before I had seen him; his body & extremities were covered with a

brown coloured eruption, not raised from the surface; his general health very much affected, he complained of constant pains over his whole body, increased at night; he was decidedly of a scrofulous habit. The statement made of this case satisfied me that it would require more to conquer it, than I expected to find in the Stillingia; the result was more satisfactory than I had anticipated, yet I do not attribute all the advan=tages gained, to the article used, but partly to the auxilliary remedies, such as attention to diet - cleanliness, state of stomach &c. Let the result speak for itself. — Immediately after he was examined he was directed to be put under the Stillingia in form of ℞ dose ℥ij, to ℥ss of water to be given every third hour. About a half an hour after he had taken this dose he had a call to stool, & in a short time to a second, his bowels previously been rather costive. Soon after the

second stool a fine diaphoresis came over him + a tendency to sleep: which when gratified produced relief to his pains. It will unnecessary to detail each days appearance, suffice it to say that, in a fortnight or better he left the house, advantaged by treatment he had undergone no doubt, but how much must be attributed to this article it would be difficult to tell. The sore on the penis as before observed was not a chancre, therefore nothing but cleanliness, + one or two poultices to reduce its irritability, was required for its cure; the same may be said of the suppurated bubo. The fact was that the patient had neglected himself, previous to, as well as after his complaint. This much is decidedly proved I think, that it does act on the nervous system or in other words is a sedative.

For the following case of rheumatism treated with

this article I am indebted to a friend. I can vouch for the truth of the statement, as I witnessed a great part of the treatment myself; it was made too in the Marine-hospital of Charleston under the superintendance of the attending physician of that Institution, who read the statement & assented to its truth. It is one of the strongest supports the article has, for its character; but still, it will be observed that he had been under the best treatment, as commonly practised; how far it affected the disease we shall not attempt to say. I give the case verbatim as Rec^d it.

Case 4^th. Bannion, a patient at the marine hospital, 40 yrs of age, states that, "last Feb^y when under the operation of mercury for the cure of syphilis, he went to sea & being much exposed contracted a rheumatism, under which attack he has been labouring for for four months: the greatest part of this time he had been confined

to his bed, unable to move himself in any man-ner, & seldom has been without extreme pain. He now lies constantly on his back with his legs drawn up, & his countenance expressive of great agony. All the usual remedies have been tried for his relief, but in vain; & without his pill of opium at night he is unable to get a wink of sleep. On the 20th his calomel & opium being continued as usual, he was advised to take a teacupful of the decoction of the Stillingia and repeat it three or four times a day, in the place of a tonic infusion he had been hitherto using. To the 25th he had been each day benefitted by the article; it produced a free diaphoresis which eased his pains very much; his distressed appearance was greatly removed, & tho' to day it nauseated him considerably, his appetite has enormously increased. To the 30th he gradually improved, & on this day smiled for the first time

since his arrival at the hospital; he said he had slept the previous night sounder than he had done for four months before; he had also an evacuation thro' the stillingia. Dr. Campbell was so well pleased with the effects of this root that he ordered all other medicines to be continued no longer. July 3rd He moved one leg to day with considerable ease; sleeps at night without the aid of an opium pill; his bowels are kept regularly open &c. 12th Improved, says he feels like "hop=ping out of bed"; during the night he made a quart of water, which, he observed, he had done ever since he had commenced with this article. 16th Is able to sit up, & turn himself gently in bed; & then being to expedite the cure, I gave him 30.r of the powdered root, three times a day, & stopped the decoction. 22nd says his bowels are rather too open, & attributes it to the powder; I therefore ordered it discontinued, & he being able

to walk on his crutches, trusted the perfection of the cure to exercise. 25th A bad, rainy day which affects him a little, having a little pain every now & then, ordered grs v of the powder at bed time. 26th powder benefitted him, for tho' the day is chilly & damp, it does not affect him his general improvement continues. August 1st The weather continuing bad, & he being a little impondent, he has taken a slight cold which brought on his pains in a degree; directed ℥ss stillingia to be divided into six powders, & one to be taken thrice times a day. 6th He feels much better. 10th He feels so well that he asked for his discharge this morning, & has taken his passage for New York. I shall make no comments on this case; but merely observe that I wish time had allowed me to have tried this article in a similar case which was offered me.

In the application of this article to disease so few have been the cases in which it has been tried in my hands, that I can not form a just decision as to its alterative effect; it however is not worthy of the character it bears, not=withstanding the favourable termination of the case of Rheumatism cured by it. I can speak more favourably of its properties, & from wha. I have observed, should infer 1st That it has the power of producing emesis, & in the country where no other can be conveniently obtained, it may be used to effect this object. 2nd It proves cathartic, subject to the above condition. & 3rd, as far as I can judge it may be used in such cases as would be found benefitted by the Sar==saparilla root. But granting that its qualiti=ties are of so little importance as to be unworthy of being considered a remedy in disease, still, from the character it now has among those who use

it from popular opinion, it should not be allowed to pass unnoticed; & it is here that I would to medicines, apply the observation of the great Armstrong made in reference to cases of disease, he says, "In modern publications it is perhaps too much the fashion, if such an expression be allowable in science, to exhibit the successful result of experiments, & to keep the unsuccessful cases in the back ground. It was the custom of Hippocrates & Sydenham to publish cases of failure as well as of success: & the former might be made fully as useful as the latter, by serving, like charts, to guard others from the mistakes which had been previously made".

It is in this character that I offer these crude observations.